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LOPEZ AND WEMYSS'
EDITION.

NO. 2

OF THE
ACTING AMERICAN THEATRE.

THE COMEDY OF
MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING,

WITH A PORTRAIT OF

MISS KELLY,

IN THE CHARACTER OF

BEATRICE.

The Plays carefully corrected from the Prompt books of the
PHILADELPHIA THEATRE.

By M. Lopez, Prompter.

PUBLISHED BY A. R. POOLE, CHESNUT STREET,
FOR THE PROPRIETORS.

And to be had of all the principal booksellers in the
UNITED STATES.

Price to non-subscribers, Fifty cents.

PROPOSALS.

In presenting to the Public the first Number of the Acting American Theatre, the proprietors feel a pleasure in producing a specimen of American Work, which they trust will satisfy their patrons, of their determination to set emolument aside.

The want of a work, in which would be combined the excellence of the most perfect copy, with the manner of its exhibition on the Stage, a *desideratum* to the profession and an advantage to the public, induced the late Mr. Oxberry to commence his edition, the usefulness of which has been sufficiently tested; had that work been peculiarly adapted to this country, it would have been arrogance in us to have entered the lists, but it is not :—a comparison of the copy of Oxberry, with the representation on the Stage, will at once show how necessarily the English plays have been Americanized, it is our object to print them as represented on the American Stage, and the proprietors hope to give general satisfaction on this head.

It is intended to embellish each number with a characteristic portrait of some performer on the American boards. The portraits will as far as practicable be executed by Mr. Neagle, and the engraving by Mr. Longacre, both Americans ; possessing talents which rank them high in public opinion.

Each piece will be faithfully printed from its respective official copy in the Library of the Philadelphia Theatre.

Every exertion will be made to obtain Original American Dramas, which will be printed as early as possible.

The superintendence of this Publication has been assigned to M. LOPEZ, Prompter of the Philadelphia and Baltimore Theatres.

TERMS.

A Number will be printed every two weeks, embellished with a Portrait, in every way equal to the first Number, at Thirty-seven and a half cents.

Each Number must be paid for on delivery.

The work will be continued if 500 subscribers can be obtained.

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Eastern District of Pennsylvania, to wit:



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D. CALDWELL.

Clerk of the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

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PAID

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J. R. M. BICKING, PRINTER,—1826.

Persons Represented.

1826.
Philadelphia.

<i>Don Pedro</i>	.	.	.	.	Mr. Wemyss.
<i>Leonato</i>	.	.	.	.	Mr. Warren.
<i>Don John</i>	.	.	.	.	Mr. Webb.
<i>Claudio</i>	.	.	.	.	Mr. Fielding.
<i>Benedick</i>	.	.	.	.	Mr. Wood.
<i>Balthazar</i>	.	.	.	.	Mr. Collins.
<i>Antonio</i>	.	.	.	.	Mr. Wheatly.
<i>Borachio</i>	.	.	.	.	Mr. Darley.
<i>Conrade</i>	.	.	.	.	Mr. J. Jefferson
<i>Dogberry</i>	.	.	.	.	Mr. Jefferson.
<i>Verges</i>	.	.	.	.	Mr. Mestayer.
<i>Friar</i>	.	.	.	.	Mr. Hathwell,
<i>Sexton</i>	.	.	.	.	Mr. Bignall.
<i>Seacoal</i>	.	.	.	.	Mr. Murray.
<i>Oatcake</i>	.	.	.	.	Mr. Meer.
<i>Hero</i>	.	.	.	.	Mrs. Anderson.
<i>Beatrice</i>	.	.	.	.	Miss Kelly.
<i>Margaret</i>	.	.	.	.	Mrs. Jefferson.
<i>Ursula</i>	.	.	.	.	Mrs. Meer.

Stage Directions.

By	R. H.	- - - - -	is meant	- - - - -	Right Hand.
	L. H.	- - - - -		- - - - -	Left Hand.
	S. E.	- - - - -		- - - - -	Second Entrance.
	U. E.	- - - - -		- - - - -	Upper Entrance.
	M. D.	- - - - -		- - - - -	Middle Door.
	D. F.	- - - - -		- - - - -	Door in Flat.
	R. H. D.	- - - - -		- - - - -	Right Hand Door.
	L. H. D.	- - - - -		- - - - -	Left Hand Door.

Time of Representation.—Two hours and forty minutes.

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.

ACT. I.

SCENE I.—*Before LEONATO's House.*

Enter LEONATO, reading a letter, HERO, BEATRICE, and BALTHAZAR, from L. H. U. E. through gates in centre.

Leon. I learn in this letter, that Don Pedro of Aragon comes this night to Messina.

Balth. He is very near by this; he was not three leagues off when I left him.

Leon. How many gentlemen have you lost in this action?

Balth. But few of any sort and none of name.

Leon. A victory is twice itself, when the achiever brings home full numbers. I find here, that Don Pedro hath bestowed much honour on a young Florentine, called Claudio.

Balth. Much deserved on his part, and equally remember'd by Don Pedro: He hath borne himself beyond the promise of his age; doing, in the figure of a lamb, the feats of a lion.

Leon. He hath an uncle here in Messina will be very much glad of it.

Balth. I have already delivered him letters, and there appears much joy in him; even so much, that joy could not show itself modest enough, without a badge of bitterness.

Leon. Did he break out into tears?

Balth. In great measure.

Leon. A kind overflow of kindness: There are no faces truer than those that are so washed.

Beat. I pray you, is signior Montanto returned from the wars.

Balth. I know none of that name, lady; there was none such in the army of any sort.

Leon. What is he that you ask for, niece?

Hero. My cousin means signior Benedick of Padua.

Balth. O, he is returned; and as pleasant as ever he was.

Beat. I pray you, how many hath he killed and eaten in these wars? But how many hath he killed? for, indeed, I promised to eat all of his killing.

Balth. He hath done good service, lady, in these wars.

Beat. You had musty victual, and he hath holp to eat it: he is a very valiant trencher-man, he hath an excellent stomach.

Balth. And a good soldier too, lady.

Beat. And a good soldier to a lady;—But what is he to a lord?

Leon. You must not, sir, mistake my niece: there is a kind of merry war betwixt signior Benedick and her: they never meet, but there is a skirmish of wit between them.

Beat. Alas, he gets nothing by that. In our last conflict, four of his five wits went halting off, and now is the whole man governed with one: so that if he have wit enough to keep himself warm, let him bear it for a difference between himself and his horse; for it is all the wealth that he hath left, to be known a reasonable creature.—Who is his companion now? He hath every month a new sworn brother.

Balth. Is it possible?

Beat. Very easily possible: he wears his faith but

as the fashion of his hat, it ever changes with the next block.

Balth. I see, lady, the gentleman is not in your books.

Beat. No : an he were, I would burn my study. But, I pray you, who is his companion ?

Balth. He is most in the company of the right noble Claudio.

Beat. O Lord ! he will hang upon him like a disease: he is sooner caught than the pestilence, and the taker runs presently mad. Heaven help the noble Claudio ! if he have caught the Benedick, it will cost him a thousand pound ere he be cured.

Leon. You will never run mad, niece.

Beat. No, not till a hot January. (*Flourish of Trumpets, R. H.*)

Balth. Don Pedro is approach'd. (*Exit, L. H.*)

*Enter DON PEDRO, DON JOHN, CLAUDIO, and BENE-
DICK. R. H.*

Pedro. Good signior Leonato, you are come to meet your trouble : the fashion of the world is to avoid cost, and you encounter it.

Leon. Never came trouble to my house in the likeness of your Grace: for trouble being gone, comfort should remain ; but, when you depart from me, sorrow abides, and happiness takes his leave.

Pedro. You embrace your charge too willingly.— I think, this is your daughter.

Leon. Her mother hath many times told me so.

Bene. Were you in doubt, sir, that you ask'd her.

Leon. Signior Benedick, no ; for then were you a child.

Pedro. You have it full, Benedick : we may guess by this what you are, being a man. Truly, the lady fathers herself :—Be happy, lady ! for you are like an honourable father.

Bene. If signior Leonato be her father, she would

not have his head on her shoulders, for all Messina, as like him as she is. (*All retire up but BENEDICK, and BEATRICE.*)

Beat. I wonder, that you will still be talking, signior Benedick ; no body marks you.

Bene. What, my dear lady Disdain ! are you yet living ?

Beat. Is it possible, disdain should die, while she hath such meet food to feed it, as signior Benedick ? Courtesy itself must convert to disdain, if you come in her presence.

Bene. Then is courtesy a turn-coat, (*BENEDICK, and BEATRICE, meet at centre.*) But it is certain, I am loved of all ladies, only you excepted ; and I would I could find in my heart that I had not a hard heart ; for, truly, I love none.

Beat. A dear happiness to women ; they would else have been troubled with a pernicious suitor. I thank Heaven, and my cold blood, I am of your humour for that ; I had rather hear my dog bark at a crow, than a man swear he loves me.

Bene. Heaven keep your ladyship still in that mind ! so some gentleman or other shall 'scape a predestinate scratched face.

Beat. Scratching could not make it worse, an 'twere such a face as yours.

Bene. Well, you are a rare parrot-teacher.

Beat. A bird of my tongue, is better than a beast of yours.

Bene. I would, my horse had the speed of your tongue ; and so good a continuer : But keep your way o' Heaven's name ; I have done.

Beat. You always end with a jade's trick ; I know you of old.

Pedro. (*All advancing to centre, BENEDICK, R. H. BEATRICE, L. H.*) This is the sum of all, Leonato,—signior Claudio, and signior Benedick,—my dear friend Leonato, hath invited you all. I tell him, we shall stay here at the least a month ; and he heartily

prays, some occasion may detain us longer: I dare swear he is no hypocrite, but prays from his heart.

Leon. If you swear, my lord, you shall not be forsworn.—Let me bid you welcome, my lord: being reconciled to the prince your brother, I owe you all duty. *(To John.)*

John. I thank you: I am not of many words, but I thank you.

Leon. Please it your Grace lead on?

Pedro. Your hand, Leonato; we will go together.

(Exeunt, all but BENE. and CLAUD. thro' gate.)

Claud. Benedick, didst thou note the daughter of signior Leonato?

Bene. I noted her not; but I looked on her.

Claud. Is she not a modest young lady?

Bene. Do you question me, as an honest man should do, for my simple true judgment? or would you have me speak after my custom, as being a professed tyrant to their sex?

Claud. No, I pray thee, speak in sober judgment.

Bene. Why, i' faith, methinks she is too low for a high praise, too brown for a fair praise, and too little for a great praise: only this commendation I can afford her; that were she other than she is, she were unhandsome; and being no other but as she is, I do not like her.

Claud. Thou thinkest, I am in sport; I pray thee tell me truly how thou likest her.

Bene. Would you buy her, that you inquire after her?

Claud. Can the world buy such a jewel?

Bene. Yea, and a case to put it into. But, speak you this with a sad brow? or do you play the flouting Jack? Come, in what key shall a man take you?

Claud. In mine eye, she is the sweetest lady that ever I looked on.

Bene. I can see yet without spectacles, and I see no such matter: there's her cousin, an' she were

not possessed with a fury, exceeds her as much in beauty, as the first of May doth the last of December. But, I hope, you have no intent to turn husband ; have you ?

Claud. I would scarce trust myself, though I had sworn the contrary, if Hero would be my wife.

Bene. Is it come to this, i'faith ? Hath not the world one man, but he will wear his cap with suspicion ? Shall I never see a bachelor of threescore again ? Go to, i'faith ; an thou wilt needs thrust thy neck into a yoke, wear the print of it, and sigh away Sundays. Look, Don Pedro is returned to seek you.

Enter Don PEDRO, thro' gate.

Pedro. What secret hath held you here, that you followed not to Leonato's ?

Bene. I would your Grace would constrain me to tell.

Pedro. I charge thee on thy allegiance.

Bene. You hear, Count Claudio : I can be secret as a dumb man, I would have you think so ; but on my allegiance :—mark you this, on my allegiance :—He is in love. With who ?—now that is your Grace's part.—Mark, how short his answer is :—With Hero, Leonato's short daughter.

Claud. If this were so, so were it uttered.

Bene. Like the old tale, my lord : it is not so, nor 'twas not so ; but, indeed, Heaven forbid it should be so.

Claud. If my passion change not shortly, Heaven forbid it should be otherwise.

Pedro. Amen, if you love her ; for the lady is very well worthy.

Claud. You speak this to fetch me in, my lord.

Pedro. By my troth, I speak my thought.

Claud. And, in faith, my lord, I spoke mine.

Bene. And, by my two faiths and troths, my lord, I spoke mine.

Claud. That I love her I feel.

Pedro. That she is worthy, I know.

Bene. That I neither feel how she should be loved, nor know how she should be worthy, is the opinion that fire cannot melt out of me ; I will die in it at the stake.

Pedro. Thou wast ever an obstinate heretic in the despite of beauty.

Claud. And never could maintain his part, but in the force of his will.

Bene. That a woman conceived me, I thank her ; that she brought me up, I likewise give her most humble thanks : but that I will have a recheat winded in my forehead, all women shall pardon me : Because I will not do them the wrong to mistrust any, I will do myself the right to trust none ; and the fine is, (for the which I may go the finer,) I will live a bachelor.

Pedro. I shall see thee, e'er I die, look pale with love.

Bene. With anger, with sickness, or with hunger, my lord ; not with love ; prove that ever I lose more blood with love, than I will get again with drinking, pick out mine eyes with a ballad-maker's pen, and hang me up at the door of a brothel-house, for the sign of blind Cupid.

Pedro. Well, if ever thou dost fall from this faith, thou wilt prove a notable argument.

Bene. If I do, hang me in a bottle, like a cat, and shoot at me.

Pedro. Well, as time shall try :

In time the savage bull doth bear the yoke.

Bene. The savage bull may ; but if ever the sensible Benedick bear it, pluck off the bull's horns and set them in my forehead : and let me be vilely painted ; and in such great letters as they write, "*Here*

is good horse to hire," let them signify under my sign—
"Here you may see Benedick, the married man."

(Crosses to R. H.)

Pedro. Nay, if Cupid have not spent all his quiver in Venice, thou wilt quake for this shortly.

Bene. I look for an earthquake too then.

(Crosses to centre.)

Pedro. Well, you will temporise with the hours. In the mean time, good signior Benedick, repair to Leonato's; commend me to him, and tell him, I will not fail him at supper; for, indeed, he hath made great preparation.

Bene. I have almost matter enough in me for such an embassy; and so I commit you—

Claud. To the tuition of Heaven: From my house (if I had it)—

Pedro. The sixth of July: Your loving friend, Benedick.

Bene. Nay, mock not, mock not: The body of your discourse is sometimes guarded with fragments, and the guards are but slightly basted on neither: ere you flout old ends any further, examine your conscience; and so I leave you.

(Exit, BENE. thro' gate.)

Claud. My liege, your highness now may do me good.

Pedro. My love is thine to teach; teach it but how, And thou shalt see how apt it is to learn Any hard lesson that may do thee good.

Claud. Hath Leonato any son, my lord?

Pedro. No child but Hero, she's his only heir: Dost thou affect her, Claudio?

Claud. O my lord,
 When you went onward on this ended action,
 I look'd upon her with a soldier's eye,
 That lik'd, but had a rougher task in hand
 Than to drive liking to the name of love:
 But now I am return'd, and that war-thoughts

Have left their places vacant, in their rooms
Come thronging, soft and delicate desires,
All prompting me how fair young Hero is,
Saying, I lik'd her ere I went to wars.

Pedro. Thou wilt be like a lover presently,
And tire the hearer with a book of words:
If thou dost love fair Hero, cherish it;
And I will break with her. Was't not to this end,
That thou began'st to twist so fine a story?

Claud. How sweetly do you minister to love,
That know love's grief by his complexion!
But lest my liking might too sudden seem,
I would have salv'd it with a longer treatise.

Pedro. What need the bridge much broader than
the flood?
Look, what will serve, is fit: 'tis once, thou lov'st;
And I will fit thee with the remedy.
I know, we shall have revelling to-night;
I will assume thy part in some disguise,
And tell fair Hero I am Claudio;
And in her bosom I'll unclasp my heart,
And take her hearing prisoner with the force
And strong encounter of my amorous tale;
Then, after, to her father will I break;
And, the conclusion is, she shall be thine:
In practise let us put it presently.

(*Exeunt thro' gate.*)

SCENE II.—*A Hall in LEONATO's House.*

Enter DON JOHN and CONRADE, R. H.

Con. What the goujere, my lord! why are you
thus out of measure sad?

John. There is no measure in the occasion
that breeds it, therefore the sadness is without
limit.

Con. You should hear reason.

John. And when I have heard it, what blessing bringeth it?

Con. If not a present remedy, yet a patient sufferance.

John. I cannot hide what I am: I must be sad when I have cause, and smile at no man's jests; eat when I have stomach, and wait for no man's leisure; sleep when I am drowsy, and tend to no man's business; laugh when I am merry, and claw no man in his humour.

Con. Where it is impossible you should take true root, but by the fair weather that you make yourself: it is needful that you frame the season for your own harvest.

John. I had rather be a canker in a hedge, than a rose in his grace; and it better fits my blood to be disdain'd of all, than to fashion a carriage to rob love from any: in this, though I cannot be said to be a flattering honest man, it must not be denied but I am a plain-dealing villain. I am trusted with a muzzle, and enfranchised with a clog; therefore I have decreed not to sing in my cage: If I had my mouth, I would bite; if I had my liberty, I would do my liking; in the mean time, let me be that I am, and seek not to alter me.

Con. Can you make use of your discontent?

John. I make all use of it, for I use it only. Who comes here! What news, Borachio?

Enter BORACHIO, L. H.

Bora. I came yonder from a great supper; the prince, your brother, is royally entertain'd by Leonato; and I can give you intelligence of an intended marriage.

John. Will it serve for any model to build mischief on? What is he for a fool, that betroths himself to unquietness?

Bora. Marry, it is your brother's right hand.

John. Who? the most exquisite Claudio?

Bora. Even he.

John. A proper squire! And who, and who? which way looks he?

Bora. Marry, on Hero, the daughter and heir of Leonato.

John. A very forward March-chick! How came you to this? Come, come, let us thither; this may prove food to my displeasure: that young start-up hath all the glory of my overthrow; if I can cross him any way, I bless myself every way: You are both sure, and will assist me?

Con. To the death, my lord.

John. Let us to the great supper; their cheer is the greater, that I am subdued: 'Would the cook were of my mind!
(*Exeunt, L. H.*)

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*A Room in LEONATO's House.*

Enter LEONATO, ANTONIO, HERO, BEATRICE, L. H.

Leon. Was not count John here at supper?

Hero. I saw him not.

Beat. How tartly that gentleman looks! I never can see him, but I am heart-burn'd an hour after.

Hero. He is of a very melancholy disposition.

Beat. He were an excellent man, that were made just in the mid-way between him and Benedick: the one is too like an image, and says nothing; and the other, too like my lady's eldest son, evermore tattling.

Leon. Then half signior Benedick's tongue in count John's mouth, and half count John's melancholy in signior Benedick's face,—

Beat. With a good leg, and a good foot, uncle, and money enough in his purse, such a man would win any woman in the world,—if he could get her good will.

Leon. By my troth, niece, thou wilt never get thee a husband, if thou be so shrewd of thy tongue.

Beat. For the which blessing, I am at Heaven upon my knees every morning and evening: Lord, I could not endure a husband with a beard on his face! I had rather lie in woollen.

Leon. You may light upon a husband, that hath no beard.

Beat. What should I do with him? dress him in my apparel, and make him my waiting-gentlewoman? He that hath a beard, is more than a youth; and he that hath no beard, is less than a man: and he that is more than a youth, is not for me; and he that is less than a man, I am not for him: Therefore I will

even take sixpence in earnest of the bear-herd, and lead his apes into hell.

Leon. (*Advancing.*) Well daughter, (*to HERO*) I trust, you will be ruled by your father.

Beat. Yes, faith; it is my cousin's duty to make courtesy, and say, *Father, as it please you.* (*Crosses to R. H.*) But yet for all that, cousin, let him be a handsome fellow, or else make another courtesy, and say, *Father, as it please me.*

Leon. Well, niece, I hope to see you one day fitted with a husband.

Beat. Not till Heaven make men of some other metal than earth. Would it not grieve a woman to be overmaster'd with a piece of valiant dust? to make an account of her life to a clod of wayward marle? No, uncle, I'll none: Adam's sons are my brethren; and truly, I hold it a sin to match in my kindred.

Leon. Daughter, remember what I told you: if the prince do solicit you in that kind, you know your answer.

Beat. The fault will be in the music, cousin, if you be not woo'd in good time: if the prince be too important, tell him there is a measure in every thing, and so dance out the answer. For hear me, Hero; wooing, wedding and repenting, is as a Scotch jig, a measure, and a cinque-pace: the first suit is hot and hasty, like a Scotch jig, and full as fantastical; the wedding, mannerly-modest, as a measure full of state and ancientry; and then comes repentance, and with his bad legs, falls into the cinque-pace faster and faster, till he sink into his grave.

Leon. Cousin, you apprehend passing shrewdly.

Beat. I have a good eye, uncle; I can see a church by day-light.

(*Music, R. H. U. E.*)

Leon. The revellers are entering.

(*Music, R. H. U. E.*)

Enter DON PEDRO, CLAUDIO, BENEDICK, BALTHAZAR, DON JOHN, BORACHIO, CONRADE, MARGARET, URSULA, and others, mask'd, thro' arch.

Pedro. Lady, will you walk about with your friend?

Hero. So you walk softly, and look sweetly, and say nothing, I am yours for the walk; and, especially when I walk away.

Pedro. With me in your company?

Hero. I may so, when I please.

Pedro. And when please you to say so?

Hero. When I like your favour; for Heaven defend, the lute should be like the case!

Pedro. My visor is Philemon's roof; within the house is Jove.

Hero. Why then, your visor should be thatch'd.

Pedro. Speak low, if you speak love.

(Pedro and Hero retire, R. H.)

A DANCE.

(After the dance, Enter BENEDICK and BEATRICE, L. H. U. E. laughing.)

Beat. Will you not tell me who told you so?

Bene. No, you shall pardon me.

Beat. Nor will you not tell me who you are?

Bene. Not now.

Beat. That I was disdainful—and that I had my good wit out of the *Hundred merry Tales*;—Well this was signior Benedick that said so.

Bene. What's he?

Beat. I am sure, you know him well enough.

Bene. Not I, believe me.

Beat. Did he never make you laugh?

Bene. I pray you, what is he?

Beat. Why, he is the prince's jester: a very dull

fool ; only his gift is in devising impossible slanders : none but libertines delight in him ; and the commendation is not in his wit, but in his villainy ; for he both pleaseth men, and angers them, and then they laugh at him, and beat him ; I am sure he is in the fleet : I would he had boarded me.

Bene. When I know the Gentleman, I'll tell him what you say.

Beat. Do, do : he'll but break a comparison or two on me ; which, peradventure, not mark'd, or not laugh'd at, strikes him into melancholy ; and then there's a partridge' wing saved, for the fool will eat no supper that night. (*The Company beginning to leave the room.*) We must follow the leaders. (*Music, Exit all but DON JOHN, BORACHIO, and CLAUDIO.*)

John. Sure, my brother is amorous on Hero, and hath withdrawn her father to break with him about it : The ladies follow her, and but one visor remains.

Bora. And that is Claudio : I know him by his bearing.

John. Are not you signior Benedick ?

Claud. You know me well ; I am he.

John. Signior, you are very near my brother in his love : he is enamoured on Hero ; I pray you dissuade him from her, she is no equal for his birth : you may do the part of an honest man in it.

Claud. How know you he loves her ?

John. I heard him swear his affection.

Bora. So did I too ; and he swore he would marry her to-night.

John. Come let us to the banquet.

(*Exeunt DON JOHN and BORA, L. H.*)

Claud. Thus answer I in name of Benedick.

But hear these ill news with the ears of Claudio.—
'Tis certain so ;—the prince woos for himself.

Friendship is constant in all other things,
Save in the office and affairs of love :

Therefore, all hearts in love use their own tongues ;
Let every eye negotiate for itself,
And trust no agent : for beauty is a witch,
Against whose charms faith melteth into blood.
This is an accident of hourly proof,
Which I mistrusted not : Farewel therefore, Hero !

Enter BENEDICK, L. H.

Bene. Count Claudio ?

Claud. Yea, the same.

Bene. Come, will you go with me ?

Claud. Whither ?

Bene. Even to the next willow, about your own business, count. What fashion will you wear the garland of ? About your neck, like an usurer's chain ? or under your arm, like a lieutenant's scarf ? You must wear it one way, for the prince hath got your Hero.

Claud. I wish him joy of her.

Bene. Why that 's spoken like an honest drover ; so they sell bullocks. But did you think the prince would have served you thus ?

Claud. I pray you, leave me.

Bene. Ho ! now you strike like the blind man ; 'twas the boy that stole your meat, and you'll beat the post.

Claud. If it will not be, I'll leave you.

(Exit, L. H.)

Bene. Alas, poor hurt fowl ! Now will he creep into sedges.—But, that my lady Beatrice should know me, and not know me ! The prince's fool !—Ha ! it may be, I go under that title, because I am merry.—Yea ; but so ; I am apt to do myself wrong : I am not so reputed : it is the base, the bitter disposition of Beatrice, that puts the world into her person, and so gives me out. Well, I'll be reveng'd as I may.

Enter DON PEDRO, R. H.

Pedro. Now, signior, where's the count? Did you see him?

Bene. Troth, my lord, I have play'd the part of lady Fame. I found him here as melancholy as a lodge in a warren; I told him, and, I think I told him true, that your Grace had got the good will of his young lady; and I offered him my company to a willow tree, either to make him a garland, as being forsaken, or to bind him up a rod, as being worthy to be whipped.

Pedro. To be whipped! What's his fault?

Bene. The flat transgression of a school-boy: who, being overjoy'd with finding a bird's nest, shows it his companion, and he steals it.

Pedro. Wilt thou make a trust a transgression? The transgression is in the stealer.

Bene. Yet it had not been amiss, the rod had been made, and the garland too; for the garland he might have worn himself,; and the rod he might have bestowed on you, who, as I take it, have stol'n his bird's nest.

Pedro. I will but teach them to sing, and restore them to the owner.

Bene. If their singing answer your saying, by my faith, you say honestly.

Pedro. The lady Beatrice hath a quarrel to you; the gentleman that danced with her, told her, she is much wrong'd by you.

Bene. Wrong'd! she wrong'd! she misused me past the endurance of a block; an oak, but with one green leaf on it, would have answer'd her; my very visor began to assume life, and scold with her. She told me, not thinking I had been myself, that I was the prince's jester; that I was duller than a great thaw; huddling jest upon jest, with such impossible conveyance, upon me, that I stood like a

man at a mark, with a whole army shooting at me : She speaks poniards, and every word stabs : if her breath were as terrible as her terminations, there were no living near her, she would infect to the north star.

Pedro. Will you marry her ?

Bene. I would not marry her, though she were endowed with all that Adam had left him before he transgress'd : she would have made Hercules have turned spit : yea, and have cleft his club to make the fire too. I would to heaven, some scholar would conjure her ; for, certainly, while she is here, a man may live as quiet in hell, as in a sanctuary ; and people sin upon purpose, because they would go thither ; so, indeed, all disquiet, horror, and perturbation follows her.

BEATRICE, CLAUDIO, LEONATO, and HERO, *within.*
Ha, ha, ha !

Pedro. Look, here she comes.

Bene. Will your Grace command me any service to the world's end ? I will go on the slightest errand now to the Antipodes, that you can devise to send me on ; I will fetch you a tooth-picker now from the farthest inch of Asia ; bring you the length of Prester John's foot ; fetch you a hair off the great Cham's beard ; do you any embassy to the Pigmies, rather than hold three words conference with this harpy. You have no employment for me ?

Pedro. None, but to desire your good company.

Enter BEATRICE, LEONATO, CLAUDIO, and
HERO, L. H.

Bene. O Lord, sir, here's a dish I love not ; I cannot endure my lady Tongue. *(Exit R. H.)*

Pedro. Come, Lady, come ; you have lost the heart of signior Benedick. You have put him down, lady, you have put him down.

Beat. I have brought Count Claudio, whom you sent me to seek.

Pedro. Why, how now, count! wherefore are you sad?

Claud. Not sad, my lord.

Pedro. How then? Sick?

Claud. Neither, my lord.

Beat. The count is neither sad, nor sick, nor merry, nor well: but civil, count; civil as an orange, and something of that jealous complexion.

Pedro. I'faith lady, I think your blazon to be true; though, I'll be sworn, if he be so, his conceit is false. Here, Claudio, I have woo'd in thy name and fair Hero is won; I have broke with her father, and his good will obtained: name the day of marriage, and heaven give thee joy!

Leon. Count, take of me my daughter, and with her my fortunes: his Grace hath made the match, and all grace say Amen to it.

(Claudio crosses to Hero.)

Beat. Speak, count, 'tis your cue.

Claud. Silence is the perfectest herald of joy: I were but little happy, if I could say how much.—Lady, as you are mine, I am yours: I give away myself for you, and dote upon the exchange.

Beat. Speak, cousin; or, if you cannot, stop his mouth with a kiss, and let not him speak, neither.

Pedro. In faith, lady, you have a merry heart.

(Crosses to Beatrice.)

Beat. Yea, my lord; I thank it, poor fool, it keeps on the windy side of care:—My cousin tells him in his ear, that he is in her heart.

Claud. And so she doth cousin.

Beat. Good lord for alliance!—Thus goes every one to the world but I, and I am sunburn'd; I may sit in a corner, and cry, heigh ho! for a husband,

Pedro. Lady Beatrice, I will get you one.

Beat. I would rather have one of your father's

getting : Hath your Grace ne'er a brother like you ? Your father got excellent husbands, if a maid could come by them.

Pedro. Will you have me, lady.

Beat. No, my lord, unless I might have another for working days ; your Grace is too costly to wear every day:—But, I beseech your Grace, pardon me ; I was born to speak all mirth, and no matter.

Pedro. Your silence most offends me, and to be merry best becomes you ; for out of question, you were born in a merry hour.

Beat. No, sure, my lord, my mother cry'd ; but then there was a star danced, and under that was I born.—Cousins, Heaven give you joy !

Leon. Niece, will you look to those things I told you of ?

Beat. I cry you mercy, uncle. (*Crosses to R. H.*)
—By your Grace's pardon. (*Exit Beatrice, R. H.*)

Pedro. By my troth, a pleasant spirited lady. Count Claudio, when mean you to go to church ?

Claud. To-morrow, my lord ; time goes on crutches, till love have all his rites.

Leon. Not till Monday, my dear son, and a time too brief too, to have all things answer my mind.

Pedro. Come you shake the head at so long a breathing ; but, I warrant thee, Claudio, the time shall not go dully by us ; I will, in the interim, undertake one of Hercules' labours : which is to bring signior Benedick, and the lady Beatrice into a mountain of affection, the one with the other. I would fain have it a match ; and I doubt not but to fashion it, if you three will but minister such assistance as I shall give you direction.

Leon. My lord, I am for you, though it cost me ten nights watching.

Claud. And I, my lord.

Pedro. And you too, gentle Hero ?

Hero. I will do any modest office, my lord, to help my cousin to a good husband.

Pedro. And Benedick is not the unhopefullest husband that I know; thus far can I praise him. I will teach you how to humour your cousin, that she shall fall in love with Benedick :—and I, with your two helps, will so practice on Benedick, that, in despite of his quick wit and his queasy stomach, he shall fall in love with Beatrice. If we can do this, Cupid is no longer an archer; his glory shall be ours, for we are the only love-gods. Go in with me, and I will tell you my drift.

(*Exeunt, R. H.*)

SCENE II.—*A Hall in LEONATO's House.*

Enter DON JOHN and BORACHIO, R. H.

John. It is so; the count Claudio shall marry the daughter of Leonato.

Bora. Yea, my lord; but I can cross it.

John. Any bar, any cross, any impediment will be medicinal to me: I am sick in displeasure to him; and whatsoever comes athwart his affection, ranges evenly with mine. How can'st thou cross this marriage?

Bora. Not honestly, my lord; but so covertly, that no dishonesty shall appear in me.

John. Show me briefly how.

Bora. I think, I told your lordship, a year since how much I am in the favour of Margaret, the waiting-gentlewoman to Hero.

John. I remember.

Bora. I can, at any unseasonable instant of the night, appoint her to look out at her lady's chamber-window.

John. What life is in that, to be the death of this marriage!

Bora. The poison of that lies in you to temper. Go you to the prince your brother ; spare not to tell him, that he hath wrong'd his honour in marrying the renowned Claudio, (whose estimation do you mightily hold up) to a contaminated stale, such a one as Hero.

John. What proof shall I make of that ?

Bora. Proof enough. Go then, find me a meet hour to draw Don Pedro and the count Claudio, alone : tell them, that you know that Hero loves me ; intend a kind of zeal both to the prince and Claudio ; as—in love of your brother's honour who hath made this match ; and his friend's reputation, who is thus like to be cozen'd with the semblance of a maid,—that you have discover'd thus. They will scarcely believe this without trial : offer them instances ; which shall bear no less likelihood, than to see me at her chamber window ; hear me call Margaret, Hero ; hear Margaret term me Borachio ; and bring them to see this, the very night before the intended wedding : for, in the mean time, I will so fashion the matter, that Hero shall be absent ; and there shall appear such seeming truth of Hero's disloyalty, that jealousy shall be called assurance, and all the preparation overthrown.

John. Grow this to what adverse issue it can, I will put it in practice ; be cunning in the working this, and thy fee is a thousand ducats. (*Crosses to L. H.*) I will presently go learn their day of marriage. (*Exeunt, BORACHIO, R. H. DON JOHN, L. H.*)

SCENE III.—LEONATO's Garden.

BENEDICK, *discovered seated.*

Bene. I do much wonder, that one man, seeing how much another man is a fool when he dedicates his behaviours to love, will, after he hath laugh'd at

such shallow follies in others, become the argument of his own scorn, by falling in love : and such a man is Claudio. I have known, when there was no music with him but the drum and the fife ; and now had he rather hear the tabor and the pipe : I have known when he would have walk'd ten mile a foot, to see a good armour ; and now will he lie ten nights awake, carving the fashion of a new doublet. He was wont to speak plain, and to the purpose, like an honest man, and a soldier ; and now is he turn'd orthographer ; his words are a very fantastical banquet, just so many strange dishes. May I be so converted, and see with these eyes ? I cannot tell : I think not : I will not be sworn, but love may transform me to an oyster ; but I'll take my oath on it, till he have made an oyster of me, he shall never make me such a fool. One woman is fair ; yet I am well : another is wise ; yet I am well : another virtuous ; yet I am well : but till all graces be in one woman, one woman shall not come in my grace. Rich she shall be, that's certain ; wise, or I'll none ; virtuous, or I'll never cheapen her ; fair, or I'll never look on her ; mild, or come not near me ; noble, or not I, of good discourse, an excellent musician, and her hair shall be of what colour it please Heaven. Ha ! the prince and Monsieur Love ! I will hide me in the arbour. (*Withdraws.*)

Enter DON PEDRO, LEONATO, CLAUDIO, BALTHAZAR, and SINGERS, R. H.

Pedro. Come, shall we hear this music ?

Claud. Yea, my good lord :—How still the evening is, as hush'd on purpose to grace harmony !

Pedro. See you where Benedick hath hid himself ? Come, Balthazar, we'll hear that song again.

GLEE.

I.

Sigh no more, ladies, sigh no more,
 Men were deceivers ever;
 One foot in sea, and one on shore;
 To one thing constant never:
 Then sigh not so,
 But let them go,
 And be you blithe and bonny;
 Converting all your sounds of woe
 Into, Hey nonny, nonny.

II.

Sing no more ditties, sing no mo-
 Of dumps so dull and heavy;
 The fraud of men was ever so,
 Since summer first was leavy.
 Then sigh not so, &c.

Bene. If he had been a dog, that howl'd thus, they would have hang'd him: and, I pray Heaven, his bad voice bode no mischief! I had as lief have heard the night-raven.

Pedro. Dost thou hear, Balthazar? I pray thee get us some excellent music; for, to-morrow night we would have it at the lady Hero's chamber-window.

Balth. The best I can, my lord.

Pedro. Do so: farewell. (*Exeunt, BALTHAZAR and SINGERS, R. H.*) Come hither, Leonato: what was it you told me of to-day? that your niece Beatrice was in love with signior Benedick?

(*They sit.*)

Claud. O, ay: (*Aside.*)—Stalk on, stalk on; the fowl sits.—I did never think that lady would have loved any man.

Leon. No, nor I neither; but most wonderful, that she should so dote on signior Benedick, whom she hath in all outward behaviour seem'd ever to abhor.

Bene. (*Listening, R. H. U. E.*) Is't possible? Sits the wind in that corner.

Leon. By my troth, my lord, I cannot tell what to think of it; but that she loves him with an enraged affection,—it is past the infinite of thought.

Pedro. May be, she doth but counterfeit.

Claud. 'Faith, like enough.

Leon. Counterfeit? There never was counterfeit of passion came so near the life of passion, as she discovers it.

Pedro. Why, what effects of passion shows she?

Claud. Bait the hook well; this fish will bite.

(*Aside.*)

Leon. What effects, my lord! She will sit you,—You heard my daughter tell you how.

Claud. She did, indeed.

Pedro. How, how, I pray you? You amaze me: I would have thought her spirit had been invincible against all assaults of affection.

Leon. I would have sworn it had, my lord; especially against Benedick.

Bene. I should think this a gull, but that the white-bearded fellow speaks it: knavery cannot, sure, hide himself in such reverence.

Claud. (*Aside.*) He hath ta'en the infection; hold it up.

Pedro. Hath she made her affection known to Benedick?

Leon. No; and swears she never will: that's her torment.

Bene. So, so.

Pedro. It were good, that Benedick knew of it by some other, if she will not discover it. I pray you tell Benedick of it, and hear what he will say.

Leon. Were it good, think you?

Claud. 'Tis very possible he'll scorn it; for the man, as you know all, hath a contemptible spirit.

Bene. Very well!

Claud. Never tell him, my lord; let her wear it out with good counsel.

Leon. Nay, that's impossible; she may wear her heart out first.

Pedro. Well, we'll hear further of it by your daughter; let it cool the while. I love Benedick well; and I could wish he would modestly examine himself, to see how much he is unworthy so good a lady.
(*Bell rings, R. H.*)

Leon. My lord, will you walk? dinner is ready.
(*They rise.*)

Claud. (Aside.) If he do not dote on her upon this, I will never trust my expectation.

Pedro. Let there be the same net spread for her; and that must your daughter and her gentlewomen carry. The sport will be, when they hold one, an opinion of another's dotage, and no such matter; that's the scene that I would see,—Let us send her to call him into dinner.
(*Exeunt, R. H.*)

BENEDICK *advances softly to centre.*

Bene. This can be no trick: The conference was sadly borne.—They have the truth of this from Hero. They seem to pity the lady; it seems, her affections have their full bent. Love me! why, it must be requited. I hear how I am censured: they say, I will bear myself proudly, if I perceive the love come from her; they say too, that she will rather die than give any sign of affection.—I did never think to marry. (*Crosses to R. H.*) I must not seem proud:—Happy are they that hear their detractions, and can put them to mending. They say the lady is fair! 'tis a truth, I can bear them witness; and virtuous;—'tis so, I cannot reprove it: and wise, but for loving me:—By my troth, it is no addition to her wit;—nor no great argument of her folly, for I will be horribly in love with her.—I may chance have some odd quirks and remnants of wit broken on me, because I have railed so long against mar-

riage: But doth not the appetite alter? A man loves the meat in his youth, that he cannot endure in his age. Shall quips, and sentences, and these paper bullets of the brain, awe a man from the career of his humour? No, the world must be peopled. (*Walks about troubled.*) When I said, I would die a bachelor I did not think I should live till I were married.—Here comes Beatrice: By this day, she's a fair lady: I do spy some marks of love in her.

(*Takes off his hat, wipes it, and adjusts his dress.*)

Enter BEATRICE, R. H.

Beat. Against my will, I am sent to bid you come in to dinner.

Bene. Fair Beatrice, I thank you for your pains.

Beat. I took no more pains for those thanks, than you take pains to thank me; if it had been painful, I would not have come.

Bene. You take pleasure then in the message?

Beat. Yea, just so much as you may take upon a knife's point, and choke a daw withal:—You have no stomach, signior; fare you well. (*Exit, R. H.*)

Bene. Ha! *Against my will I am sent to bid you come in to dinner*—there's a double meaning in that. *I took no more pains for those thanks, than you took pains to thank me*—that's as much as to say, Any pains that I take for you is as easy as thanks: If I do not take pity on her, I am a villain; if I do not love her, I am a Jew: I will go get her picture.

(*Exit, R. H.*)

END OF ACT II.

Consume away in sighs, waste inwardly :
It were a better death than die with mocks.

Urs. Yet tell her of it, hear what she will say.

Hero. No, rather I will go to Benedick,
And counsel him to fight against his passion :
And, truly, I'll devise some honest slanders
To stain my cousin with : one doth not know,
How much an ill word may empoison liking.

Urs. O, do not do your cousin such a wrong.
She cannot be so much without true judgment,
(Having so sweet and excellent a wit,
As she is priz'd to have) as to refuse
So rare a gentleman as signior Benedick.

Hero. Indeed, he hath an excellent good name.

Urs. His excellence did earn it, ere he had it.—
When are you married, madam ?

Hero. Why, every day ;—to-morrow.

Urs. She's lim'd I warrant you ; we have caught
her, madam.

Hero. If it prove so, then loving goes by haps :
Some Cupid kills with arrows, some with traps.

(*Exeunt HERO and URSULA, R. H.*)

BEATRICE advances cautiously.

Beat. What fire is in mine ears ? Can this be true ?

Stand I condemn'd for pride and scorn so much ?
Contempt, farewell ! and maiden pride, adieu !

No glory lives behind the back of such.
And, Benedick, love on, I will requite thee ;
Taming my wild heart to thy loving hand ;
If thou dost love, my kindness shall incite thee
To bind our hopes up in a holy band :
For others say, thou dost deserve ; and I
Believe it better than reportingly. (*Exit R. H.*)

SCENE II.—*A Hall in LEONATO's House.*

*Enter DON PEDRO, LEONATO, CLAUDIO, and
BENEDICK, L. H.*

Pedro. I do but stay till your marriage be consummate, and then go I toward Arragon.

Claud. I'll bring you thither, my lord, if you'll vouchsafe me.

Pedro. Nay, I will only be bold with Benedick for his company: for, from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot, he is all mirth; he hath twice or thrice cut Cupid's bow-string, and the little hang-man dare not shoot at him: he hath a heart as sound as a bell, and his tongue is the clapper; for what his heart thinks, his tongue speaks.

Bene. Gallants, I am not as I have been.

Leon. So say I; methinks you are sadder.

Claud. I hope he be in love.

Pedro. Hang him, truant; there's no true drop of blood in him, to be truly touch'd with love: if he be sad, he wants money.

Bene. I have the tooth-ache.

Pedro. Draw it.

Bene. Hang it!

Pedro. What, sigh for the tooth-ache?

Leon. Where is but a humour, or a worm?

Bene. Well, every one can master a grief, but he that has it. (*Handkerchief to his face.*)

Claud. Yet say I, he is in love. If he be not in love with some woman, there is no believing of old signs; he brushes his hat o' mornings; What should that bode?

Pedro. Nay, he rubs himself with civet: Can you smell him out by that? (*Crosses to centre, and passes the handkerchief from one to the other.*)

Claud. That's as much as to say, The sweet youth's in love.

Consume away in sighs, waste inwardly :
It were a better death than die with mocks.

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Claud. That's as much as to say, The sweet youth's in love.

Pedro. The greatest note of it is his melancholy.

Claud. Nay, but his jesting spirit; which is now crept into a lutestring.

Pedro. Indeed, that tells a heavy tale for him :
Conclude, conclude, he is in love.

Claud. Nay, but I know who loves him.

Pedro. That would I know too; I warrant one that knows him not.

Claud. Yes, and his ill conditions; and, in despite of all, dies for him.

Pedro. She shall be buried with her face upwards.

Bene. Yet is this no charm for the tooth-ache.—
Old signior, walk aside with me. (*Retiring R. H.*)
I have studied eight or nine wise words to speak to you, which these hobby-horses must not hear.

(*Exeunt, BENEDICK and LEONATO, R. H.*)

Pedro. For my life, to break with him about Beatrice.

Claud. 'Tis even so: Hero and Margaret have by this time play'd their parts with Beatrice; and then the two bears will not bite one another, when they meet.

Enter DON JOHN, L. H.

John. My lord and brother, Heaven save you.

Pedro. Good den, brother.

John. If your leisure serv'd, I would speak with you.

Pedro. In private?

John. If it please you;—yet count Claudio may hear; for what I would speak of, concerns him.

Pedro. What's the matter?

John. Means your lordship to be married to-morrow?
(*To CLAUDIO.*)

Pedro. You know he does.

John. I know not that, when he knows what I know.

Claud. If there be any impediment, I pray you discover it.

John. You may think I love you not ; let that appear hereafter, and aim better at me by that I now will manifest : For my brother, I think, he holds you well ; and in dearness of heart hath help to effect your ensuing marriage : surely, suit ill spent, and labour ill bestowed !

Pedro. Why, what's the matter ?

John. I came hither to tell you ; and, circumstances shorten'd, (for she hath been too long a talking of) the lady is disloyal.

Claud. Who ? Hero ?

John. Even she : Leonato's Hero, your Hero, every man's Hero.

Claud. Disloyal ?

John. The word is too good to paint out her wickedness ; I could say, she were worse ; think you of a worse title, and I will fit her to it. Wonder not till further warrant : go but with me to-night, you shall see her chamber-window enter'd : even the night before her wedding day ; if you love her then, to-morrow wed her ; but it would better fit your honour to change your mind.

Claud. May this be so ?

Pedro. I will not think it.

John. If you dare not trust that you see, confess not that you know : if you will follow me, I will show you enough : and when you have seen more, and heard more, proceed accordingly.

Claud. If I see any thing to-night why I should not marry her to-morrow ; in the congregation, where I should wed, there will I shame her.

Pedro. And, as I woo'd for thee to obtain her, I will join with thee to disgrace her.

John. I will disparage her no farther, till you are my witnesses : bear it coldly but till midnight, and let the issue show itself.

(*Exeunt, L. H.*)

D

SCENE III.—*A Street.*

Enter DOGBERRY, VERGES, SEACOAL, OATCAKE, and four WATCHMEN, L. H.

Dogb. Are you good men and true?

Verg. Yea, or else it were pity but they should suffer salvation, body and soul.

Dogb. Nay, that were a punishment too good for them, if they should have any allegiance in them, being chosen for the Prince's watch.

Verg. Well, give them their charge, neighbour Dogberry.

Dogb. First, who think you the most desartless man to be constable?

Verg. Hugh Oatcake, sir, or George Seacoal; for they can write and read.

Dogb. Come hither, neighbour Seacoal: Heaven hath blessed you with a good name: to be a well-favoured man is the gift of fortune; but to write and read comes by nature.

Sea. Both which, master constable—

Dogb. You have.

Sea. I have.

Dogb. I knew it would be your answer. Well, for your favour, sir, why, give Heaven thanks, and make no boast of it; and for your writing and reading, let that appear when there is no need of such vanity. You are thought here to be the most senseless and fit man for the constable of the watch; therefore bear you the lantern; this is your charge: You shall comprehend all vagrom men; you are to bid any man stand, in the Prince's name.

Sea. How if he will not stand?

Dogb. Why then, take no note of him, but let him go; and presently call the rest of the watch together, and thank Heaven you are rid of a knave.

Verg. If he will not stand when he is bidden, he is none of the Prince's subjects.

Dogb. True, and they are to meddle with none but the Prince's subjects:—You shall also make no noise in the streets; for, for the watch to babble and to talk, is most tolerable and not to be endured.

Sea. We will rather sleep than talk; we know what belongs to a watch.

Dogb. Why, you speak like an ancient and most quiet watchman; for I cannot see how sleeping should offend: only, have a care that your bills be not stolen: Well, you are to call at all the ale-houses, and bid those that are drunk get them to bed.

Sea. How if they will not?

Dogb. Why then, let them alone, till they are sober; if they make you not then the better answer, you may say, they are not the men you took them for.

Sea. Well, sir.

Dogb. If you meet a thief you may suspect him, by virtue of your office, to be no true man: and for such kind of men, the less you meddle or make with them, why, the more is for your honesty.

Sea. If we know him to be a thief, shall we not lay hands on him?

Dogb. Truly, by your office, you may; but, I think, they that touch pitch will be defiled: the most peaceable way for you, if you do take a thief, is, to let him show himself what he is, and steal out of your company.

Verg. You have been always called a merciful man, partner.

Dogb. Truly, I would not hang a dog by my will; much more a man who hath any honesty in him.

Verg. If you hear a child cry in the night, you must call to the nurse, and bid her still it.

Sea. How if the nurse be asleep, and will not hear us?

Dogb. Why then, depart in peace, and let the child wake her with crying; for the ewe that will not hear her lamb when it baes, will never answer a calf when he bleats.

Verg. 'Tis very true..

Dogb. This is the end of the charge. You, constable, are to present the Prince's own person; if you meet the Prince in the night you may stay him.

Verg. Nay, by 'r lady, that, I think, he cannot..

Dogb. Five shillings to one on't, with any man that knows the statues, he may stay him: marry, not without the Prince be willing: for, indeed, the watch ought to offend no man; and it is an offence to stay a man against his will.

Verg. By 'r lady, I think, it be so.

Dogb. Ha, ha, ha! Well, masters, good night: an there be any matter of weight chances, call up me: keep your fellows' counsels and your own, and good night.—Come, neighbour.

(*Exeunt, DOGBERRY, and VERGES, R. H.*)

Sea. Well, masters, we hear our charge: let us go sit here upon the church-bench till two, and then all to-bed.

Re-Enter DOGBERRY, and VERGES, R. H.

Dogb. One word more, honest neighbours: I pray you, watch about signior Leonato's door; for the wedding being there to-morrow, there is a great coil to-night: Adieu, be vigilance, I beseech you.

(*Exit DOGBERRY and VERGES, R. H.*)

Enter BORACHIO, R. H. S. E.

Bora. What! Conrade,—

Sea. Peace, stir not. (*Aside, to his party on L. H.*)

Bora. Conrade, I say !

Enter CONRADE, R. H. S. E.

Con. Here, man, I am at thy elbow.

Bora. Stand thee close then ; and I will, like a true drunkard, utter all to thee.

Oat. (*Aside.*) Some treason, masters ; yet stand close.

Bora. Therefore know, I have earned of Don John a thousand ducats.

Con. Is it possible that any villainy should be so dear ?

Bora. Thou should'st rather ask, if it were possible any villainy should be so rich ; for when rich villains have need of poor ones, poor ones may make what price they will.

Bora. But know, that I have to-night woo'd Margaret, the lady Hero's gentlewoman, by the name of Hero ; she leans me out at her mistress' chamber-window, bids me a thousand times good night,—I tell this tale vilely :—I should first tell thee, how the Prince Claudio, and my master, planted, and placed, and possessed by my master Don John, saw afar off in the orchard this amiable encounter.

Con. And thought they, Margaret was Hero ?

(*Watch preparing to attack.*)

Bora. Two of them did, the prince and Claudio ; but the devil my master knew she was Margaret ; away went Claudio enraged, (*Watch advance,*) swore he would meet her as he was appointed, next morning at the temple, and there, before the whole congregation, shame her with what he saw over-night, and send her home again without a husband.

Oat. We charge you in the prince's name, stand.

Sea. Call up the right master constable : (*Exit a Watchman, L. H.*) We have here recovered the most

dangerous piece of lechery that ever was known in the commonwealth.

Oat. And one Deformed is one of them ; I know him, he wears a lock.

Con. Masters, masters,—(*Seacoal and Watchmen seize them.*)

Oat. You'll be made bring Deformed forth, I warrant you.

Con. Masters,—

Sea. Never speak ; we charge you, let us obey you to go with us. (*Exeunt, L. H.*)

SCENE IV.—*Room in LEONATO'S House.*

Enter LEONATO, R. H. DOGBERRY and VERGES, L. H.

Leon. What would you with me, honest neighbour ?

Dogb. Marry, sir, I would have some confidence with you, that discerns you nearly.

Leon. Brief, I pray you ; for you see, 'tis a busy time with me.

Dogb. Marry, this it is, sir.

Verg. Yes, in truth it is, sir.

Leon. What is it, my good friends ?

Dogb. Goodman Verges, sir, speaks a little off the matter : an old man, sir, and his wits are not so blunt, as, Heaven help, I would desire they were ; but, in faith ; honest, as the skin between his brows.

Verg. Yes, I thank Heaven, I am as honest as any man living, that is an old man, and no honester than I.

Dogb. Comparisons are odorous : *palabras*, neighbour Verges.

Leon. Neighbours, you are tedious.

Dogb. It pleases your worship to say so, but we

are the poor duke's officers ; but, truly, for mine own part, if I were as tedious as a king, I could find in my heart to bestow it all on your worship.

Leon. All thy tediousness on me ! ha !

Dogb. Yea, and 'twere a thousand times more than 'tis : for I hear as good exclamation on your worship, as of any man in the city ; and though I be but a poor man, I am glad to hear it.

Verg. And so am I.

Leon. I would fain know what you have to say.

Verg. Marry sir, our watch to-night, excepting your worship's presence, have ta'en a couple of as arrant knaves as any in Messina.

Dogb. A good old man, sir ; he will be talking ; as they say, When the age is in, the wit is out ; Heaven help us ! it is a world to see !—Well said, i'faith, neighbour Verges :—An two men ride of a horse, one must ride behind :—An honest soul, i' faith, sir ; by my troth he is, as ever broke bread : but, Heaven is to be worshipp'd : All men are not alike ; alas good neighbour !

Leon. Indeed neighbour, he comes too short of you.

Dogb. Gifts, that Heaven gives.

Leon. I must leave you.

Dogb. One word, sir : our watch, sir, have, indeed, comprehended two aspicious persons, and we would have them this morning examined before your worship.

Leon. Take their examination yourself, and bring it me ; I am now in great haste, as it may appear unto you.

Dogb. It shall be suffigance.

Leon. Fare you well. Come in and take some wine, farewell. (Exit, R. H.)

Dogb. Go, good partner, go, get you to Francis Seacoal, bid him bring his pen and inkhorn to the gaol ; we are now to examination these men.

Verg. And we must do it wisely.

Dogb. We will spare for no wit, I warrant you ; here's that (*touching his forehead*) shall drive some of them to a *non com* : only get the learned writer to set down our excommunication, and meet me at the gaol. (*Exeunt, DOGBERRY, R. H. VERGES, L. H.*)

END OF ACT III.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*A Chapel.*

DON PEDRO, DON JOHN, LEONATO, FRIAR, CLAUDIO, BENEDICK, ANTONIO, HERO, BEATRICE,
and LADIES *discoverd*.

Leon. Come, Friar Francis, be brief; only to the plain form of marriage, and you shall recount their particular duties afterwards.

Friar. You come hither, my lord, to marry this lady?

Claud. No.

Leon. To be married to her, friar; you come to marry her.

Friar. Lady, you come hither to be married to this count?

Hero. I do.

Friar. If either of you know any inward impediment why you should not be conjoined, I charge you, on your souls, to utter it.

Claud. Know you any, Hero?

Hero. None, my lord.

Friar. Know you any, count?

Leon. I dare make his answer, none.

Claud. O, what men dare do! what men may do! What men daily do!

Bene. How now! Interjections?

Claud. Stand thee by, Friar: Father by your leave; Will you with free and unconstrained soul Give me this maid, your daughter?

Leon. As freely son, as Heaven did give her me.

Claud. And what have I to give you back, whose worth

May counterpoise this rich and precious gift?

Pedro. Nothing, unless you render her again.

Claud. Sweet prince, you learn me noble thankfulness.—

There, Leonato, take her back again ;
 She's but the sign and semblance of her honour :—
 Behold; how like a maid she blushes here :
 O, what authority and show of truth
 Can cunning sin cover itself withal !
 She knows the heat of a luxurious bed :
 Her blush is guiltiness, not modesty.

Leon. What do you mean, my lord ?

Claud. Not to be married,
 Not knit my soul to an approved wanton.

Leon. Dear my lord, if you in your own proof
 Have vanquish'd the resistance of her youth,——

Claud. No, Leonato,
 I never tempted her with word too large ;
 But, as a brother to his sister show'd
 Bashful sincerity and comely love.

Hero. And seem'd I ever otherwise to you ?

Claud. Out on thy seeming ! I will write against
 it :— (*BENEDICK retires up the Stage.*)
 You seem to me as Dian in her orb ;
 As chaste as is the bud ere it be blown ;
 But you are more intemperate in your blood
 Than Venus, or those pamper'd animals
 That rage in savage sensuality.

Hero. Is my lord well, that he doth speak so wide ?

Leon. Sweet prince, why speak not you ?

Pedro. What should I speak ?
 I stand dishonour'd, that have gone about
 To link my dear friend to a wanton here.

Leon. Are these things spoken ? or do I but dream ?

John. Sir, they are spoken, and these things are
 true.

Hero. True, O Heaven !

Bene. (*down L. H.*) This looks not like a nuptial.

Claud. Leonato, stand I here ?
 Is this the Prince ? Is this the Prince's brother ?
 Is this face Hero's ? Are our eyes our own ?

Leon. All this is so ; but what of this, my lord ?

Claud. Let me but move one question to your daughter ;

And, by that fatherly and kindly power
That you have in her, bid her answer truly.

Leon. I charge thee do so, as thou art my child.

Hero. O Heaven defend me ! how am I beset !
What kind of catechizing call you this ?

Claud. To make you answer truly to your name.

Hero. Is it not Hero ? Who can blot that name
With any just reproach ?

Claud. Marry, that can Hero ;
Hero, itself can blot out Hero's virtue.
What man was he talk'd with you yesternight
Out at your window, betwixt twelve and one ?
Now, if you can, answer to this.

Hero. I talk'd with no man at that hour, my lord.

Pedro. Leonato,
I am sorry you must hear ; upon mine honour,
Myself, my brother, and this grieved count,
Did see her, hear her, at that hour last night,
Talk with a ruffian at her chamber-window ;
Who hath, indeed, most like a liberal villain,
Confess'd the vile encounters they have had
A thousand times in secret.

John. Fie, fie ! they are
Not to be nam'd, my lord, not to be spoke of ;
There is not chastity enough in language,
Without offence, to utter them : Thus, pretty lady,
I am sorry for thy much mis-goverment.

(*Exit DON JOHN, L. H.*)

Claud. O Hero ! what an angel hadst thou been,
If half thy outward graces had been placed
About thy thoughts, and counsels of thy heart !
But, fare thee well, most foul, most fair ! farewell,
For thee I'll lock up all the gates of love,
And on my eye-lids shall conjecture hang,

To turn all beauty into thoughts of harm,
And never shall it more be gracious.

(HERO swoons in BEATRICE's arms.)

Leon. Hath no man's dagger here a point for me!

Beat. Why, how now cousin, wherefore sink you down?

(Exeunt DON PEDRO, and CLAUDIO, L. H.)

Bene. (L. H.) How doth the lady?

Beat. Dead, I think ;—Help, uncle ;—
Hero! Why, Hero!—Uncle!—Signior Benedick!
Friar!

Leon. O fate, take not away thy heavy hand!
Death is the fairest cover for her shame,
That may be wish'd for.

Beat. How now cousin Hero?

Friar. Have comfort lady. (Advancing to centre.)

Leon. Dost thou look up?

Friar. Yea ; wherefore should she not?

Leon. Wherefore? Why doth not every earthly
thing

Cry shame upon her? Could she here deny
The story that is printed in her blood?—
Do not live, Hero ; do not ope thine eyes :
For did I think thou would'st not quickly die,
Thought I thy spirits were stronger than thy shames,
Myself would, on the rearward of reproaches,
Strike at thy life. Griev'd I, I had but one?
Chid I for that at frugal nature's frame?
I've, one too much by thee! O, she is fallen
Into a pit of ink! that the wide sea
Hath drops too few to wash her clean again;

Bene. Sir, sir, be patient:
For my part, I am so attir'd in wonder,
I know not what to say.

Beat. O, on my soul, my cousin is belied!

Bene. Lady, were you her bedfellow last night?

Beat. No, truly, not ; although until last night,
I have this twelvemonth been her bedfellow.

Leon. Confirm'd, confirm'd ! O, that is stronger
made,
Which was before barr'd up with ribs of iron !
Would the two Princes lie ? and Claudio lie ?
Who lov'd her so, that, speaking of her foulness,
Wash'd it with tears ? Hence from her ; let her die.

Friar. Hear me a little ;
For I have only been silent so long,
And given way unto this course of fortune,
By noting of the lady : I have mark'd
A thousand blushing apparitions start
Into her face ; a thousand innocent shames
In angel whiteness bear away those blushes ;
Call me a fool : Trust not my reading, nor my ob-
servations,
My reverence, calling, nor divinity,
If this sweet lady lie not guiltless here
Under some biting error.

Leon. Friar, it cannot be :
Thou seest, that all the grace that she hath left,
Is, that she will not add to her damnation
A sin of perjury ; she not denies it :
Why seek'st thou then to cover with excuse
That which appears in proper nakedness ?

Friar. Lady, what man is he you are accus'd of ?

Hero. They know, that do accuse me ; I know
none :

If I know more of any man alive,
Than that which maiden modesty doth warrant,
Let all my sins lack mercy. (*Crosses to Leonato, and
kneels.*)—O my father,
Prove you that any man with me convers'd
At hours unmeet, or that I yesternight
Maintain'd the change of words with any creature,
Refuse me, hate me, torture me to death. [*Princes.*]

Friar. There is some strange misprision in the

Bene. Two of them have the very bent of honour;
And if their wisdoms be misled in this,
The practice of it lives in John the bastard,
Whose spirits toil in frames of villainies.

Leon. I know not; if they speak but truth of her,
These hands shall tear her; if they wrong her
honour,
The proudest of them shall well hear of it.

Friar. Pause a while,
And let my counsel sway you in this case.
Your daughter here the Princes left for dead;
Let her awhile be secretly kept in.
And publish it that she is dead indeed.

Leon. What shall become of this? what will this
do?

Friar. She dying, as it must be maintain'd,
Upon the instant that she was accus'd,
Shall be lamented, pitied and excus'd
Of every hearer: So will it fair with Claudio,
When he shall hear she died upon his words.

Bene. Signior Leonato, let the friar advise you:
And though, you know, my inwardness and love
Is very much unto the Prince and Claudio,
Yet, by mine honour, I will deal in this
As secretly, and justly, as your soul
Should with your body.

Leon. Being that I flow in grief,
The smallest twine may lead me.

Friar. 'Tis well consented; presently away;—
Come lady, die to live: this wedding day,
Perhaps, is but prolong'd; have patience and endure.

(*Exeunt, all but BENEDICK and BEATRICE, R. H.*)

Bene. Lady Beatrice, have you wept all this while?

Beat. Yea, and I will weep a while longer.

Bene. I will not desire that. (*Advances to her.*)

Beat. You have no reason, I do it freely.

Bene. Surely, I do believe your fair cousin is
wrong'd.

Beat. Ah, how much might the man deserve of me, that would right her.

Bene. Is there any way to show such friendship?

Beat. A very even way, but no such friend.

Bene. May a man do it?

Beat. It is a man's office, but not yours.

Bene. I do love nothing in the world so well as you; (*Takes her hand.*) Is not that strange?

Beat. As strange as the thing I know not: It were as possible for me to say, I loved nothing so well as you: but believe me not; and yet I lie not; I confess nothing, nor I deny nothing:—I am sorry for my cousin.

Bene. By my sword, Beatrice, thou lovest me.

Beat. Do not swear by it, and eat it.

Bene. I will swear by it, that you love me; and I will make him eat it, that says, I love not you.

Beat. Will you not eat your word?

Bene. With no sauce that can be devised to it: I protest, I love thee.

Beat. Why then, Heaven forgive me!

Bene. What offence, sweet Beatrice?

Beat. You have staid me in a happy hour; I was about to protest, I loved you.

Bene. And do it with all thy heart.

Beat. I love you with so much of my heart, that none is left to protest.

Bene. Come, bid me do any thing for thee.

Beat. Kill Claudio.

Bene. Ha! not for the wide world.

Beat. You kill me to deny it: Farewel.

(*Going, R. H.*)

Bene. Tarry, sweet Beatrice. (*Takes her hand.*)

Beat. I am gone, though I am here;—There is no love in you:—Nay, I pray you let me go.

(*Struggling.*)

Bene. Beatrice,—

Beat. In faith, I will go. (*Breaks from him.*)

Bene. We 'll be friends first.

(Follows, and pulls her back.)

Beat. You dare easier be friends with me, than fight with mine enemy.

Bene. Is Claudio thine enemy?

Beat. Is he not approved in the height a villain, that hath slander'd, scorn'd, dishonour'd my kinswoman?—O, that I were a man!—What! bear her in hand until they come to take hands; and then with public accusation, uncovered slander, unmitigated rancour,—O Heaven, that I were a man! I would eat his heart in the market-place.

Bene. Hear me, Beatrice.

Beat. Talk with a man out at a window?—a proper saying!

Bene. Nay but, Beatrice;—

Beat. Sweet Hero!—she is wrong'd, she is slander'd, she is undone.

Bene. Beat—

Beat. Princes, and counties! Surely a princely testimony, a goodly count-confect; a sweet gallant, surely! O that I were a man for his sake! or that I had any friend, would be a man for my sake! But manhood is melted into courtesies, valour into compliment, and men are only turned into tongue, and trim ones too: he is now as valiant as Hercules, that only tells a lie, and swears it:—I cannot be a man with wishing, therefore I will die a woman with grieving.

Bene. Tarry, good Beatrice: By this hand, I love thee.

Beat. Use it for my love some other way than swearing by it.

Bene. Think you in your soul, the count Claudio hath wrong'd Hero?

Beat. Yea, as sure as I have a thought, or a soul.

Bene. Enough, I am engaged, *(puts on his hat.)* I will challenge him.

Beat. Will you?

Bene. Upon my soul I will. I will kiss your hand, and so leave you.

Beat. You'll be sure to challenge him.

Bene. By those bright eyes I will.

Beat. My dear friend, kiss my hand again.

Bene. As you hear of me, so think of me. Go, comfort your cousin; I must say she's dead, and so farewell.

Beat. Benedick, kill him, kill him, if you can!

Bene. As sure as he is alive I will.—By this hand, Claudio shall render me a dear account.

(*Exeunt* BEATRICE, R. H. BENEDICK, L. H.)

SCENE II.—*A Prison.*

Enter FOUR WATCHMEN, *with table and stools, then*

Enter DOGBERRY, VERGES, SEACOAL, and OAT-CAKE, L. H. *and seat themselves at Table.*

Dogb. Is our whole dissembly appear'd?

Enter SEXTON, R. H. *with a large book, inkhorn and pen.*

Verg. O, a stool and a cushion for the sexton!

Sexton. Which be the malefactors?

Dogb. Marry, that am I and my partner.

Verg. Nay, that's certain; we have the exhibition to examine.

Sexton. But which are the offenders that are to be examined? let them come before master constable.

Dogb. Yea, marry, let them come before me.—
(*SEACOAL beckons to the Watch.*)

*Enter WATCH, bringing in BORACHIO and CON-
RADE, L. H.*

What is your name, friend?

Bora. Borachio.

Dogb. Pray write down—Borachio.—Yours, sirrah?

Con. I am a gentleman, sir, and my name is Conrade.

Dogb. Write down—master gentleman Conrade. Masters, do you serve Heaven.

Con. and Bora. Yes, sir, we hope.

Dogb. Write down—that they hope they serve Heaven: and write Heaven first; for Heaven defend but Heaven should go before such villains!—Masters, it is proved already that you are little better than false knaves: and it will go near to be thought so shortly. How answer you for yourselves?

Con. Marry, sir, we say we are none.

Dogb. A marvellous witty fellow, I assure you; but I will go about with him.—Come you hither, sirrah; a word in your ear, sir; I say to you, it is thought you are false knaves. (*To Borachio.*)

Bora. Sir, I say to you, we are none.

Dogb. Well, stand aside.—'Fore Heaven they are both in a tale: Have you writ down—that they are none?

Sexton. Master constable, you go not the way to examine; you must call the watch that are their accusers.

Dogb. Yea, marry, that's the efstest way:—Let the watch stand forth:—Masters, I charge you, in the Prince's name, accuse these men.

Oat. This man said, sir, that Don John, the Prince's brother, was a villain.

Dogb. Write down—Prince John a villain:—Why this is flat perjury, to call a Prince's brother—villain.

Bora. Master constable,—

Dogb. Pray thee fellow, peace ; I do not like thy look, I promise thee.

Sexton. What heard you him say else ?

Sea. Marry, that he had received a thousand ducats of Don John, for accusing the lady Hero wrongfully.

Dogb. Flat burglary, as ever was committed.

Verg. Yea, by the mass, that it is.

Sexton. What else, fellow ?

Oat. And that count Claudio did mean, upon his words, to disgrace Hero before the whole assembly, and not marry her.

Dogb. O villain ! thou wilt be condemned into everlasting redemption for this.

Sexton. What else ?

Sea. This is all.

Sexton. And this is more, masters, than you can deny. Prince John is this morning secretly stolen away ; Hero was in this manner accused, in this very manner refused, and upon the grief of this, suddenly died.—Master constable, let these men be bound, and brought to Leonato's ; I will go before, and show him their examination. (*Exit, L. H.*)

Dogb. Come, let them be opinioned.—Come, bind them :—Thou naughty varlet !

Con. Away ! you are an ass, you are an ass.

Dogb. Dost thou not suspect my place ? Dost thou not suspect my years ?—O that he were here to write me down—an ass !—but, masters, remember, that I am an ass ; though it be not written down, yet forget not that I am an ass:—No, thou villain, thou art full of piety, as shall be proved upon thee by good witness. I am a wise fellow ; and, which is more, an officer ; and, which is more, a householder ; and, which

is more, as pretty a piece of flesh as any in Messina; and one that knows the law, go to; and a rich fellow enough, go to; and a fellow that hath had losses; and one that hath two gowns, and every thing handsome about him :—Bring him away. O, that I had been writ down—an ass !
(*Exeunt, L. H.*)

END OF ACT IV.

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*A Court before LEONATO'S House.**Enter LEONATO and ANTONIO, R. H.*

Ant. If you go on thus, you will kill yourself;
And 'tis not wisdom, thus to second grief
Against yourself.

Leon. I pray thee, hold thy peace,
Give not me counsel,
Nor let no comfort e'er delight mine ear,
But such a one whose wrongs doth suit with mine;
Bring me a father, that so lov'd his child,
Whose joy of her is overwhelm'd like me,
And bid him speak to me of patience;
No, no; 'tis all men's office to speak patience
To those that wring under the load of sorrow;
But no man's virtue, nor sufficiency,
To be so moral, when he shall endure
The like himself: therefore, give me no counsel.

Ant. Therein do men from children nothing differ.

Leon. I pray thee, peace; I will be flesh and blood;
For there was never yet philosopher,
That could endure the tooth-ache patiently;
However they have writ the style of gods,
And made a pish at chance and sufferance.

Ant. Yet bend not all the harm upon yourself;
Make those that do offend you, suffer too.

Leon. There thou speak'st reason: nay, I will
do so:
My soul doth tell me, Hero is belied:
And that shall Claudio know, so shall the Prince,
And all of them, that thus dishonour her.

Enter DON PEDRO, and CLAUDIO, R. H. cross to L. H.

Ant. Here, come the Prince and Claudio, hastily.

Leon. Good den, good den.

Pedro. Good day to both of you.

Leon. Hear you, my lords ?

Pedro. We have some haste, Leonato.

Leon. Some haste, my lord !—well, fare you well,
my lords :—

Are you so hasty now ?—well, all is one.

Pedro. Nay, do not quarrel with us, good old man.

Ant. If he could right himself with quarrelling,
Some of us would lie low.

Claud. Who wrongs him Sir ?

Leon. Marry,

Thou, thou dost wrong me ; thou dissembler, thou!
Nay, never lay thy hand upon thy sword,
I fear thee not.

Claud. Marry, beshrew my hand,
If it should give your age such cause of fear :
In faith, my hand meant nothing to my sword.

Leon. Tush, tush, man, never fear and jest at me:
I speak not like a dotard, nor a fool,
As, under privilege of age, to brag
What I have done being young, or what would do,
Were I not old : know, Claudio, to thy teeth,
Thou hast so wrong'd my innocent child and me,
That I am forced to lay my reverence by;
And, with grey hairs, and bruise of many days,
Do challenge thee to trial of a man.
I say, thou hast belied my innocent child,
Thy slander hath gone through and through her heart,
And she lies bury'd with her ancestors ;
O, in a tomb where never scandal slept,
Save this of hers, fram'd by thy villainy !

(*Draws and going to him.*)

Claud. My villainy !

Leon. Thine Claudio ; thine, I say.

Pedro. You say not right, old man.

Leon. My lord, my lord,
I'll prove it on his body, if he dare ;

Despite his nice fence, and his active practice,
His May of youth, and bloom of lustyhood.

Claud. Away, I will not have to do with you.

Leon. Canst thou so daff me? Thou hast kill'd my
child;

If thou kill'st me boy, thou shalt kill a man.

Ant. Nay, marry, he shall kill two of us, and men
indeed;

But that's no matter, let him kill one first;

Win me and wear me, let him answer me:

Come, follow me, boy, follow me:

I'll whip you from your foining fence;

Nay, as I am a gentleman, I will.

Leon. Brother,—

Ant. Content yourself; Heav'n knows I lov'd my
niece,

And she is dead, slander'd to death by villains,

That dare as well answer a man, indeed,

As I dare take a serpent by the tongue!

Boys, apes, braggarts, jacks, milk-sops!

Leon. Brother Antony,—

Ant. Hold you content; what man! I know
them, yea,

And what they weigh, even to the utmost scruple:

Scambling, outfacing, fashion-mong'ring boys,

That lie, and cog, and flout, deprave and slander,

And speak off half a dozen dangerous words,

How they might hurt their enemies, if they durst,

And this is all.

Leon. But, brother Antony,—

Ant. Come, 'tis no matter;

Do not you meddle, let me deal in this.

Pedro. Gentlemen both, we will not wake your
patience.

My heart is sorry for your daughter's death;

But, on my honour, she was charged with nothing

But what was true, and very full of proof.

Leon. My lord, my lord,—

Pedro. I will not hear you.

Leon. No? come, brother, away:—I will be heard;—

Ant. And shall,
Or some of us will smart for it.

(*Exeunt, LEONATO and ANTONIO, R. H.*)

Enter BENEDICK, L. H.

Pedro. See, see; here comes the man we went to seek.

Claud. Now, signior! what news?

Bene. Good day, my lord.

Pedro. Welcome, signior: You are almost come to part almost a fray.

Claud. We had like to have had our two noses snapped off, by two old men without teeth.

Pedro. Leonato and his brother: what think'st thou? Had we fought, I doubt, we should have been two young for them.

Bene. In a false quarrel there is no true valour. I came to seek you both.

Claud. We have been up and down to seek thee; for we are high-proof melancholy, and would fain have it beaten away: Wilt thou use thy wit?

Bene. It is in my scabbard; Shall I draw it?

Pedro. As I am an honest man, he looks pale:—Art thou sick or angry?

Claud. What! courage, man! what though care kill'd a cat, thou hast mettle enough in thee to kill care.

Bene. Sir, I shall meet your wit in the career, if you charge it against me:—I pray you choose another subject. I don't like it.

Pedro. By this light, he changes more and more; I think, he be angry indeed. (*Retires up the Stage.*)

Claud. If he be, he knows how to turn his girdle.

Bene. Shall I speak a word in your ear?

Claud. Heaven bless me from a challenge !

Bene. You are a villain ;—I jest not :—I will make it good how you dare, with what you dare, and when you dare :—Do me right, or I will protest your cowardice. You have kill'd a sweet lady, and her death shall fall heavy on you ; let me hear from you.

Claud. Well, I will meet you, so I may have good cheer.

Pedro. What, a feast? a feast? (*Advancing centre.*)

Claud. I'faith, I thank him ; he hath bid me to a calf's head ; the which, if I do not carve most curiously, say my knife's naught.

Bene. Sir, your wit ambles well ; it goes easily.

Pedro. But when shall we set the savage bull's horns on the sensible Benedick's head ?

Claud. Yea, and text underneath, *Here dwells Benedick the married man ?*

Bene. Fare you well, boy ; you know my mind. (*Going to L. H. and turns.*) I will leave you now to your gossip-like humour : you break jests as brag-garts do their blades, which, Heaven be thanked, hurt not.—My lord, (*Takes off his hat.*) for your many courtesies, I thank you : I must discontinue your company : your brother, the bastard, is fled from Messina : you have among you, kill'd a sweet and innocent lady : for my lord Lack-beard, there, he and I shall meet ; and till then, peace be with him :—Let me hear from you.

(*Exit BENEDICK, L. H.*)

Pedro. He is in earnest.

Claud. In most profound earnest ; and, I'll warrant you, for the love of Beatrice.

Pedro. And hath challenged thee ?

Claud. Most sincerely.

Pedro. What a pretty thing man is, when he goes in his doublet and hose, and leaves off his wit. Did he not say, my brother was fled ?

Enter DOGBERRY, VERGES, CONRADE, BORACHIO, SEACOAL, OATCAKE, and the WATCH, L. H. PEDRO and CLAUDIO stand R. H.

Dogb. Come, you, sir ; if justice cannot tame you, she shall ne'er weigh more reasons in her ballance : nay, an you be a cursing hypocrite once, you must be looked to.

Pedro. How now, two of my brother's men bound ! Borachio one !

Claud. Hearken after their offence, my lord !

Pedro. Officers, what offence have these men done ?

Dogb. Marry, sir, they have committed false report ; moreover, they have spoken untruths ; secondarily, they are slanders ; sixth and lastly, they have belied a lady ; thirdly they have verified unjust things ; and, to conclude, they are lying knaves.

Pedro. First, I ask thee what they have done ; thirdly, I ask thee what's their offence ; sixth and lastly, why they are committed ; and to conclude, what you lay to their charge.

Claud. Rightly reasoned, and in his own division.

Pedro. Who have you offended, masters, that you are thus bound to your answer ? this learned constable is too cunning to be understood : what's your offence ?

Bora. Sweet Prince, let me go no further to mine answer : but do you hear me, and let this count kill me. I have deceived even your very eyes : what your wisdoms could not discover these shallow fools have brought to light ; who, in the night, overheard me confessing to this man, how Don John your brother incensed me to slander the lady Hero ; how you were brought into the orchard, and saw me court Margaret in Hero's garments ; how you disgraced her, when you should marry her : my villainy they have upon record ; which I had rather

seal with my death, than repeat over to my shame : the lady is dead upon mine and my master's false accusation ; and, briefly, I desire nothing but the reward of a villain.

Pedro. Runs not this speech like iron through your blood ?

Claud. I have drunk poison, whiles he utter'd it.

Pedro. But did my brother set thee on to this ?

Bora. Yea, and paid me richly for the practice of it.

Pedro. He is composed and fram'd of treachery : And fled he is upon this villainy.

Claud. Sweet Hero ! now thy image doth appear, In the rare semblance that I lov'd it first.

Dogb. Come, bring away the plaintiffs ; by this time our sexton hath reform'd signior Leonato of the matter : and masters do not forget to specify, when time and place shall serve, that I am an ass.

Verg. Here comes master signior Leonato and the sexton too.

Enter LEONATO, R. H. with the SEXTON.

Leon. Which is the villain ? Let me see his eyes ; That when I note another man like him, I may avoid him : which of these is he ?

Bora. If you would know your wronger, look on me.

Leon. Art thou the slave, that with thy breath hast kill'd Mine innocent child ?

Bora. Yea, even I alone.

Leon. No, not so, villain ; thou beliest thyself ; Here stand a pair of honourable men, A third is fled, that had a hand in it :— I thank you Princes for my daughter's death ; Record it with your high and worthy deeds ; 'Twas bravely done, if you bethink you of it.

Claud. I know not how to pray your patience,
Yet I must speak: choose your revenge yourself;
Impose me to what penance your invention
Can lay upon my sin: yet sinn'd I not,
But in mistaking.

Pedro. By my soul, nor I;
And yet, to satisfy this good old man,
I would bend under any heavy weight
That he'll enjoin me to.

Leon. I cannot bid you bid my daughter live,
That were impossible; but I pray you both,
Possess the people in Messina here
How innocent she died:
To-morrow morning come you to my house;
And since you could not be my son-in-law,
Be yet my nephew: my brother hath a daughter,
Almost a copy of my child that's dead,
And she alone, is heir to both of us;
Give her the right you should have given her cousin,
And so dies my revenge.

Claud. O, noble sir,
Your over-kindness doth wring tears from me!
I do embrace your offer: and dispose
For henceforth of poor Claudio.

Leon. To morrow then, I will expect your coming;
To-night I take my leave.—(*Exeunt, PEDRO and
CLAUDIO, R. H.*) This naughty man
Shall face to face be brought to Margaret,
Who, I believe, was pack'd in all this wrong.

Bora. No, by my soul, she was not:
Nor knew not what she did, when she spoke to me;
But always hath been just and virtuous,
In any thing that I do know by her.

Dogb. Moreover, sir, (which, indeed, is not under white and black) this plaintiff here, the offender, did call me ass: I beseech you, let it be remembered in his punishment.

Leon. I thank thee for thy care and honest pains.

Dogb. Your worship speaks like a most thankful and reverend youth ; and I praise Heaven for you.

Leon. There's for thy pains. (*Gives Money.*)

Dogb. Heaven save the foundation !

Leon. Go, I discharge thee of thy prisoner, and I thank thee.

Dogb. I leave an arrant knave with your worship ; which I beseech your worship, to correct yourself, for the example of others. Heaven keep your worship ; I wish your worship well : Heaven restore you to health ; I humbly give you leave to depart ; and if a merry meeting may be wished, Heaven prohibit it.—Come, neighbour.

(*Exeunt, DOGBERRY and VERGES, L. H.*)

Leon. Bring you these fellows on ; we'll talk with Margaret,

How her acquaintance grew with this lewd fellow.

Exeunt, LEONATO, SEXTON, and WATCH, R. H.)

SCENE II.—*A Hall in LEONATO's House.*

Enter BENEDICK and MARGARET, L. H.

Bene. Pray thee, sweet mistress Margaret, deserve well at my hands, by helping me to the speech of Beatrice.

Marg. Will you then write me a sonnet in praise of my beauty ?

Bene. In so high a style, Margaret, that no man living shall come over it ; for, in most comely truth, thou deservest it.

Marg. Why, shall I always keep below stairs ?

Bene. Thy wit is as quick as the grey-hound's mouth, it catches.

Marg. And yours, as blunt as the fencer's foils, which hit, but hurt not.

Bene. A most manly wit, Margaret, it will not hurt a woman ; and so, I pray thee, call Beatrice.

Marg. Well, I will call Beatrice to you.

(*Exit MARGARET, R. H.*)

Bene. (*Singing.*) *The God of love,*

That sits above,

And knows me, and knows me,

How pitiful I deserve,—

I mean, in singing ; but in loving,—Leander the good swimmer, Troilus the first employer of panders, and a whole book full of these quondam carpet mongers, whose names yet run smoothly in the even road of a blank verse, why, they were never so truly turned over and over as my poor self, in love. Marry, I cannot show it in rhyme ; I have try'd ; I can find out no rhyme to *lady* but *baby*, an innocent rhyme : for *scorn*, *horn*, a hard rhyme ; for *school*, *fool*, a babbling rhyme ; very ominous endings : No, I was not born under a rhyming planet, for I cannot woo in festival terms.—

Enter BEATRICE, R. H.

Sweet Beatrice, would'st thou come when I called thee ?

Beat. Yea, signior, and depart when you bid me.

Bene. O, stay but till then !

Beat. *Then*, is spoken ; fare you well now :— and yet, ere I go, let me go with that I came for, which is, with knowing what hath passed between you and Claudio.

Bene. Claudio undergoes my challenge ; and either I must shortly hear from him, or I will subscribe him a coward. And, I pray thee now, tell me, for which of my bad parts didst thou first fall in love with me ?

Beat. For them altogether ; which maintain'd so politic a state of evil, that they will not admit any good part to intermingle with them. But for which of my good parts did you first suffer love for me ?

Bene. Suffer love; a good epithet! I do suffer love, indeed, for I love thee against my will.

Beat. In spite of your heart, I think; alas! poor heart! If you spite it for my sake, I will spite it for yours; for I will never love that which my friend hates.

Bene. Thou and I are too wise to woo peaceably.

Beat. It appears not in this confession: there's not one wise man among twenty, that will praise himself.

Bene. An old, an old instance, Beatrice: If a man do not erect in this age his own tomb ere he dies, he shall live no longer in monument, than the bell rings, and the widow weeps.

Beat. And how long is that, think you?

Bene. Why, an hour in clamour, and a quarter in rheum: Therefore it is most expedient for the wise (if Don Worm, his conscience, find no impediment to the contrary) to be the trumpet of his own virtues, as I am to myself: So much for praising myself, (who, I myself will bear witness, is praise-worthy) and now tell me, how doth your cousin?

Beat. Very ill.

Bene. And how do you?

Beat. Very ill too.

Bene. Serve Heaven, love me, and mend: here comes one in haste.

Enter URSULA, R. H.

Urs. Madam, you must come to your uncle; it is proved, my lady Hero hath been falsely accused, the Prince and Claudio mightily abused; and Don John is the author of all, who is fled and gone.

(Exit, URSULA, R. H.)

Beat. Will you go hear this news, signior?

Bene. I will live in thy eyes, die in thy lap, and

be buried in thy heart ; and, moreover, I will go with thee to thy uncle's. *(Exeunt, R. H.)*

SCENE III.—*A Room in LEONATO's House.*

Enter LEONATO, HERO, FRIAR, ANTONIO, BENE-DICK, URSULA, and other Ladies U. E. R. H.

Friar. Did not I tell you she was innocent ?

Leon. So are the Prince and Claudio, who accus'd her.

Upon the error that you heard debated :
But Margaret was in some fault for this ;
Although against her will, as it appears.

Ant. Well, I am glad that all things sort so well.

Bene. And so am I, being else by faith enforc'd
To call young Claudio to a reckoning for it.

Leon. *(To Ladies, who are on R. H.)* Well, daughter, and you gentlewomen all,
Withdraw into a chamber by yourselves ;
And, when I send for you, come hither veil'd :
The Prince and Claudio promis'd by this hour
To visit me : *(Exit HERO and LADIES, R. H.)*
You know your office, brother ;
You must be father to your brother's daughter.
And give her to young Claudio.

Ant. Which I will do with a confirm'd countenance.

Bene. Friar, I must entreat your pains, I think.

Friar. To do what, signior ?

Bene. To bind me, or undo me, one of them.—
Signior Leonato, truth it is, good signior,
Your niece regards me with an eye of favour.

Leon. That eye my daughter lent her ; 'Tis most true.

Bene. And I do with an eye of love requite her.

Leon. The sight whereof, I think, you had from me,

From Claudio, and the Prince; But what's your will?

Bene. Your answer, sir, is enigmatical:

But, for my will, my will is, your good will
May stand with ours, this day to be conjoin'd]
In the state of honourable marriage ;—
In which, good Friar, I shall desire your help.

Leon. My heart is with your liking.

Friar. And my help.

Enter DON PEDRO, and CLAUDIO, L. H.

Leon. We here attend you ; Are you yet determined

To-day to marry with my brother's daughter ?

Claud. I'll hold my mind, were she an Ethiop.

Leon. Call her forth, brother, here's the Friar ready

(*Exit ANTONIO, R. H.*)

Pedro. Good morrow, Benedick : Why, what's the matter,

That you have such a February face,
So full of frost, of storm, and cloudiness ?

Bene. Here come the ladies.

*Enter ANTONIO, with HERO, BEATRICE, URSULA,
and other LADIES veiled, R. H.*

Claud. Which is the lady I must seize upon ?

Ant. This same is she, and I do give you her.

Claud. Why, then she's mine : Sweet, let me see your face.

Leon. No, that you shall not, till you take her hand before this Friar, and swear to marry her.

Claud. Give me your hand before this holy Friar ;
I am your husband, if you like of me.

Hero. And when I liv'd, I was your other wife :

(*Unveiling.*)

And when you lov'd, you were my other husband.

Claud. Another Hero ?

Hero. Nothing certainer :
 One Hero died defil'd ; but I do live,
 And surely as I live, I am innocent.

Pedro. The former Hero ! Hero that is dead !

Leon. She died, my lord, but whilst her slander
 liv'd.

Friar. All this amazement can I qualify ;
 When, after that the holy rites are ended,
 I'll tell you largely of fair Hero's death :
 Mean time, let wonder seem familiar,
 And to the chapel let us presently.

Bene. Soft and fair, Friar,—Which is Beatrice ?

Beat. I answer to that name. What is your will?
 (*BEATRICE and other LADIES unveil.*)

Bene. Do not you love me ?

Beat. No, no more than reason.

Bene. Why, then your uncle, and the Prince, and
 Claudio,

Have been deceived ; for they swore you did.

Beat. Do not you love me ?

Bene. No, no more than reason,

Beat. Why, then my cousin Margaret, and Ursula,
 are much deceived ; for they did swear, you did.

Bene. They swore that you were almost sick for
 me.

Beat. They swore that you were well-nigh dead
 for me.

Bene. 'Tis no such matter :—Then, you do not
 love me ?

Beat. No, truly, but in friendly recompense.

Leon. Come, cousin, I am sure you love the gen-
 tleman.

Claud. And I'll be sworn upon 't, that he loves her ;
 For here 's a paper, written in his hand,
 A halting sonnet of his own pure brain,
 Fashion'd to Beatrice. (*Gives the paper to BEAT.*)

Hero. And here's another,
Writ in my cousin's hand, stolen from her pocket,
Containing her affection unto Benedick.
(*Gives the paper to BENEDICK, and returns to R. H.
of CLAUDIO.*)

Bene. A miracle! here's our own hands against
our hearts!—Come, I will have thee; but, by this
light, I take thee for pity.

Beat. I would not deny you;—but, by this good
day, I yield upon great persuasion; and, partly, to
save your life, for I was told you were in a con-
sumption.

Bene. Peace, I will stop your mouth. (*Kissing her.*)

Pedro. How dost thou, Benedick the married man?

Bene. I'll tell the what, Prince; a college of wit-
crackers cannot flout me out of my humour: Dost
thou think, I care for a satire, or an epigram? No:
if a man will be beaten with brains, he shall wear
nothing handsome about him: In brief, since I do
purpose to marry, I will think nothing to any purpose
that the world can say against it; and therefore ne-
ver flout at me for what I have said against it;
for man is a giddy thing, and this is my conclusion.—
Claudio, I did think to have beaten thee; but in
that thou art like to be my kinsman, live unbruis'd,
and love my cousin.

Claud. I had well hoped, thou would'st have de-
nied Beatrice, that I might have cudgell'd thee.

Bene. Come, come, we are friends:—Prince, thou
art sad.

(*Goes to Prince, who has a handkerchief to his face,
and is on L. H.*)

Pedro. Yes, I've got the tooth-ache.

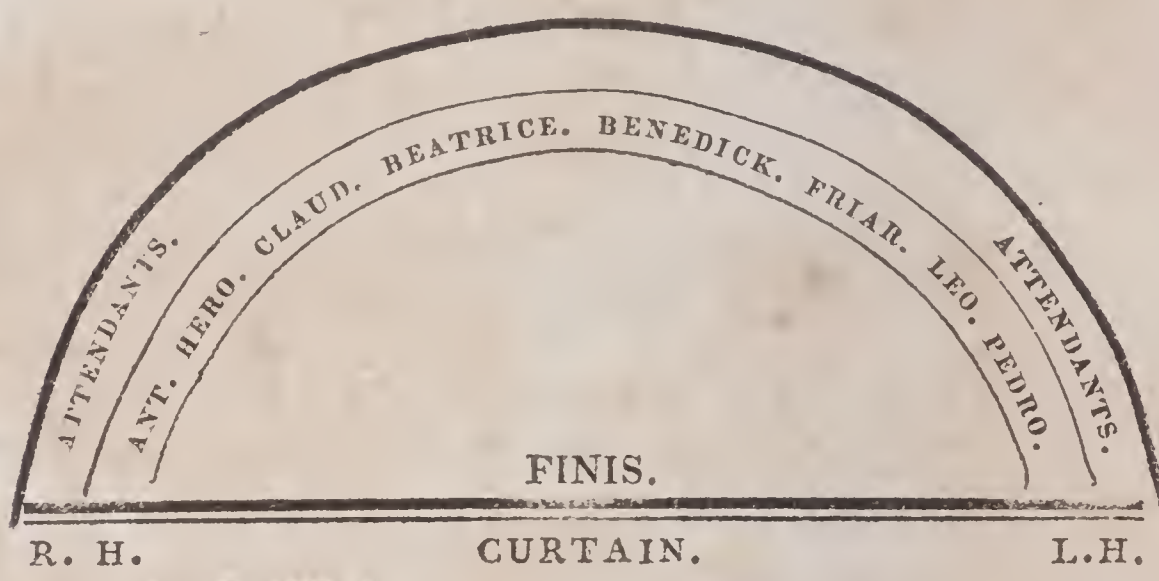
Bene. Got the tooth-ache? Get thee a wife; and
all will be well. (*All laugh.*)

Nay laugh not, laugh not:—

Your gibes and mockeries I laugh to scorn;

No staff more reverend than one tipt with horn.

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